

Testimony of Susan Eastwood
CGA Environment Committee
February 25, 2022

In **SUPPORT** of, with suggestions

H.B. 118, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CERTAIN POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS

**S.B. No. 120, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CHLORPYRIFOS ON GOLF COURSES AND
NEONICOTINOIDS FOR NONAGRICULTURAL USE**

H.B. No. 5139, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TIRES

**H.B. No. 5142, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN
GAS CYLINDERS**

H.B. No. 5143, AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

And **OPPOSED** to

**S.B. No. 115, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER
PACKAGING.**

Dear Honored Co-Chairs Senator Cohen and Representative Gresko, and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Susan Eastwood. I am a resident of Ashford and am founder and Chair of the Ashford Clean Energy Task Force, a member of the Connecticut Zero Waste Coalition, and the Chapter Chair of Sierra Club Connecticut.

I SUPPORT H.B. 118, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CERTAIN POLYSTYRENE PRODUCTS, but would like to see it strengthened. This is an important bill that would significantly reduce plastics in the waste stream and in our environment. Polystyrene items are bulky, single use plastics that cannot be recycled. Taking them out of the waste stream would be of help to our municipalities, now struggling with high tipping costs, and it would reduce the overall waste management crisis that our state is trying to address.

Reducing Polystyrene would be a benefit to public health. Polystyrene and expanded polystyrene foam are plastics containing the chemical styrene that has been linked to cancer, vision and hearing loss, impaired memory and concentration, and nervous system effects.¹ Styrene may leach out of hot Styrofoam coffee cups, for one example, delivering toxic exposure

¹ <https://saferchemicals.org/2014/05/26/styrene-and-styrofoam-101-2/>

with that first morning sip.² Polystyrene (or Styrofoam) single use containers are tossed out and often end up in waterways and the Sound, where it breaks apart and creates microplastics. These make their way up the food chain and are now found in marine animals, wildlife, and humans.

As written, this bill would cut down on the use of polystyrene (Styrofoam) lunch trays and single-use containers. I would ask that the bill be expanded to include all non-essential disposal trays, cups, bowls, lids, sleeves, utensils, plates and hinged or lidded containers (clamshells) made from expanded polystyrene and straws made from petroleum or bio based plastics. Further, the distribution or sale of these polystyrene products should be prohibited for all owners or operators of a retail establishment or catering business, or State of Connecticut department, facility or State sponsored event.

No preemption. Please include language to protect local Styrofoam ordinances already in effect, and allow municipalities to adopt stronger language if they wish to.

Polystyrene is so ubiquitous in our consumer world that it is hard to imagine how we could remove it, and yet, there are safer, more environmentally responsible alternatives available. Now is the time to act and remove this source of toxic exposure and massive waste pollution from our lives!

Other source:

<https://cehn.org/our-work/eco-healthy-child-care/ehcc-faqs/faqs-styrofoam/>

H.B. No. 5139, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR TIRES

and

H.B. No. 5142, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CERTAIN GAS CYLINDERS.

Both HB 5139 and 5142 are important bills with the intention of easing the waste crisis in Connecticut, and helping municipalities by sharing the burden of difficult to dispose of products - tires and gas cylinders. Gas cylinders and especially tires are polluting and hard to dispose of for people and for municipalities. Often they end up in the solid waste stream. Extended Product Responsibility puts the onus back onto the manufacturers of to address the end-of-life of their products. I support full-scale collection programs for all these products, to be put in place upon passage of the bill. These Extended Producer Responsibility bills would require

² <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17915704/>

producers to create a plan to manage and divert tires, and gas cylinders from our waste stream and for recycling and taking back these items.

H.B. 5139, TIRES

I support H.B. 5139, with suggested changes.

Recycling or disposal of tires is a particularly complicated issue because they are bulky and release toxic chemicals into the environment. Current reuse, such as for crumb rubber, have been shown to spread these toxic chemicals far and wide, and when used as fill for artificial turf, or in playground surfaces, they can endanger our children. Burning can release toxins into the air. This bill should add language to specify environmentally responsible practices for recycling and reuse of tires, or at least specify unacceptable methods (section one (11) lines 45-48).

Another change to the bill is to add representatives from health and environmental sectors to the non-profit EPR organizations that will run the program. This is especially important given the hazardous nature of tires (section one (7) lines 22-26).

H.B. 5142, Gas Cylinders

I support H.B. 5142, with suggestions.

Propane gas cylinders, particularly the small ones, are frequently tossed into the trash after use, but they often contain leftover propane, resulting in serious danger when they reach the MRF or incinerator. They are highly flammable and may explode, creating a hazard to staff. I recently saw a video of one of these fires, and they are difficult to extinguish too!

It is especially important to make sure the public knows how to responsibly manage these cylinders at end-of-use, so public education will be an essential part of an EPR program for cylinders. There should be collection sites that are easily accessible. A successful EPR program will avoid dangerous accidents and create jobs.

Additionally, I support the following bills:

H.B. No. 5143, AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

S.B. No. 120, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF CHLORPYRIFOS ON GOLF COURSES AND NEONICOTINOIDS FOR NONAGRICULTURAL USE.

S.B. No. 115, AN ACT CONCERNING EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONSUMER PACKAGING.

I OPPOSE this bill.

This bill would create a structure for Extended Producer Responsibility programs to be developed for varied types of consumer packaging.

As an advocate for Zero Waste policies, and a resident who is concerned about the waste crisis in Connecticut and the rising costs of tipping fees to my Town, I would have liked to support this bill. I had high hopes for the version CT DEEP was developing, as I learned about the pros and cons of what other states and counties had passed and set up. There are a number of good sections of S.B. 115 that might work to decrease the waste stream and incentivize redesign of product packaging to reduce waste. However, the bill defines “recycling” in a way that invites a greenwashing technology called “chemical recycling,” or “advanced recycling,” which is the burning of plastics to produce fuel, no better a solution than the dirty waste-to-energy incinerators we rely on today. That is not recycling!

This process may or may not produce a product that can be made back into plastic products, but the process also produces pollution and hazardous chemical emissions, including benzene, lead, and barium. These are linked to multiple health concerns, from cancer to developmental issues, and organ damage.

Chemical recycling facilities, like so-called waste-to-energy incinerators, would create a demand for plastics to be used as fuel. This is the exact opposite of our goals, and must not be enabled. There are no facilities located in Connecticut, so the packaging waste would be trucked to Georgia, Kentucky, or other area, most likely a low income, environmental justice community. A better alternative is to focus on Zero Waste policies to redesign, reduce, and reuse before we turn to recycling and waste management.



³ Zero Waste International Alliance. (2018, December 20). *Zero Waste Hierarchy of Highest and Best use*. <https://zwia.org/zero-waste-definition/>

One of the strongest and most effective ways to reduce waste is to ban single use plastics, including packaging, bags, and other products like polystyrene and plastic food service ware. I urge the Committee to choose to advance those raised bills that advance these goals, and not those which perpetuate environmental and public health disaster.

There are other issues with the bill language which could be improved, but unless the loophole for chemical recycling is closed, I must OPPOSE this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Susan Eastwood

Ashford, CT
